hallway stank of Laura's dirty feet. Louis didn't mind. He loved her just as she was.

Babs found lice in the second floor bathroom sink. They came from the clump of hair in the comb Charlene left on the commode before she went to bed. They were alive. They were still alive when I went up to see. I thought they died when they left their host. That was either a myth or they were especially sturdy bugs. They were gymnasts. They jumped. Their champions succumbed in the bowl and died. They speckled the enamel.

That morning Adam called the mental hospital and spoke to Charlene's worker. She accused us of slovenliness. We had to strip all the beds, wash all the bedding, and treat every tenant with permethrin. When Adam muttered something about our being a team, she threatened to call the Department of Health. Adam said he'd call them himself.

Charlene's worker cut her hair at the hospital. It was a hatchet job, but the sight of all those bugs dying under her clippers made her feel like a real "front line worker." She felt so good about herself she called us as soon as she'd finished. Charlene was coming back to us wearing a baseball cap over her bald pate. She had a big head. Her worker had a swelled one.

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